

1           1.       (Currently Amended) A method for selecting a contact path between a  
2 first member of an organization and a target individual, the method comprising:  
3           storing in a memory data associated with multiple members of the organization,  
4 wherein the data includes data that directly states one or more areas of expertise for the  
5 multiple members of the organization and the target individual is one of the multiple  
6 members of the organization;  
7           tracking network communications of the members of the organization;  
8           analyzing [[the]] a level of interaction between the members of the organization  
9 based on the network communications to develop a people network;  
10          receiving data indicating an area of expertise desired by the first member of the  
11 organization;  
12          processing the data that directly states the one or more areas of expertise for the  
13 multiple members of the organization to identify at least one or more target individuals of  
14 the organization, wherein the data associated with each target individual states that the  
15 target individual has expertise in the area of expertise desired by the first member of the  
16 organization;  
17          determining a contact path between the first member of the organization and at  
18 least one of the one or more target individuals, the contact path including one or more  
19 members of the organization having at least a predetermined level of interaction with at  
20 least one of the first member and at least one of the target individuals and the contact path  
21 identifies one or more members of the organization that represent a proposed path  
22 through the people network for the first member to contact at least one of the target  
23 individuals, wherein the one or members of the contact path are distinct from the first  
24 member and the target individual; and  
25          providing the contact path to the first member.

1           2.       (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1 further comprising:  
2           modeling the people network of the organization as a directed graph having plural  
3 nodes representing members of the organization and plural edges representing levels of  
4 interaction between members of the organization;

5            wherein analyzing the level of interaction comprises analyzing the edges  
6 associated with the first member and the target individual.

1            3.        (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 2 wherein each edge  
2 comprises one or more weights, each weight representing a level of interaction for one  
3 type of network communication.

1            4.        (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 3 wherein one weight  
2 represents the level of interaction for e-mail communication.

1            5.        (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 3 wherein one weight  
2 represents the level of interaction for instant messenger communication.

1            6.        (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 3 wherein one weight  
2 represents the level of interaction for telephone communication.

1            7.        (Canceled)

1            8.        (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1 further comprising:  
2 determining plural contact paths, each contact path representing a proposed path  
3 through the people network for the first member to contact a member of the organization  
4 having the desired expertise.

1            9.        (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 8 further comprising  
2 graphically depicting the plural contact paths as nodes representing members of the  
3 organization and edges representing the level of interaction between the members, each  
4 node and edge having an appearance that corresponds to the strength of the contact path.

1            10.      (Currently Amended) A system for determining a people network within  
2 a communications network, the system comprising:  
3 a processor; and

4 a memory, coupled to the processor, to store data associated with multiple  
5 members of the organization, wherein the data includes data that directly states one or  
6 more areas of expertise for the multiple members of the organization;  
7 wherein the memory further includes a people network model module interfaced  
8 with the communications network and interfaced with the memory and operable to model  
9 communications of the communications network;  
10 wherein the memory further includes code that is executable by the processor and  
11 the code comprises:  
12 an interaction level analyzer module interfaced with the people network  
13 model module and operable to apply a model of the communications to [[the]] a  
14 level of interaction of the plural members to determine a people network  
15 representation; and  
16 a target locator and contact path module interfaced with the people  
17 network model and the interaction level analyzer module to:  
18 (i) accept a query from a first member for members of the  
19 organization having a desired expertise;  
20 (ii) process the data that directly states the one or more areas of  
21 expertise for the multiple members of the organization to  
22 identify at least one or more target individuals of the  
23 organization, wherein the data associated with each target  
24 individual states that each target individual has expertise in an  
25 area of expertise desired by the first member of the  
26 organization;  
27 (iii) determine a contact path between the first member of the  
28 organization and at least one of the one or more target  
29 individuals, the contact path including one or more members of  
30 the organization having at least a predetermined level of  
31 interaction with at least one of the first member and at least one  
32 of the target individuals and the contact path identifies one or  
33 more members of the organization that represent a proposed  
34 path through the people network for the first member to contact

35 at least one of the target individuals, wherein the one or  
36 members of the contact path are distinct from the first member  
37 and each target individual; and  
38 (iv) provide the first member with the contact path and the one or more  
39 target individuals based on the desired expertise and the level of  
40 interaction of the first member with members of the  
41 organization.

1 11. (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 10 further comprising a  
2 graphical user interface operable to depict a visualization of the people network of a  
3 selected member of the organization.

1 12. (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 11 wherein the graphical  
2 user interface depicts a selected member's people network representation as plural nodes  
3 interfaced with edges, the nodes representing members of the network and the lines  
4 representing the level of interaction between the members.

1 13. (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 11 wherein the graphical  
2 user interface depicts the first member's people network representation as a bullseye  
3 having the first member at the center and members of the organization distributed in  
4 successive rings representing the level of interaction with the first member.

1 14. (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 10 wherein the people  
2 network model module is further operable to model the people network of the  
3 organization as a directed graph having plural nodes and edges, the nodes representing  
4 members of the organization and the edges representing the level of interaction between  
5 nodes.

1 15. (Canceled)

1 16. (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 10 wherein the target locator  
2 and contact path module further comprises code executable by the processor to provide at

3 least one of the one or more target individuals using a shortest path determination to  
4 prioritize target individuals in order of strongest contact path with the first member.

1 17. (Previously Presented) A method of using a computer system for  
2 determining a target individual having expertise in a subject matter of interest to a first  
3 member of an organization, the method comprising executing code stored in the  
4 computer system for:

5 storing in a memory data associated with multiple members of the organization,  
6 wherein the data includes data that directly states one or more areas of expertise for the  
7 multiple members of the organization and the target individual is one of the multiple  
8 members of the organization;

9 processing the data that directly states the one or more areas of expertise for the  
10 multiple members of the organization to identify one or more members of the  
11 organization, wherein the data associated with each of the identified members of the  
12 organization states that the one or more members have expertise in the subject matter;

13 selecting one or more target individuals from only the one or more identified  
14 members having the expertise in the subject matter as stated in the data associated with  
15 each target individual;

16 determining a contact path between the first member of the organization and at  
17 least one of the one or more target individuals, the contact path including one or more  
18 members of the organization having at least a predetermined level of interaction with at  
19 least one of the first member and at least one of the target individuals and the contact path  
20 identifies one or more members of the organization that represent a proposed path  
21 through the people network for the first member to contact at least one of the target  
22 individuals, wherein the one or members of the contact path are distinct from the first  
23 member and each target individual; and

24 providing the first member with at least one of the contact paths to ~~each~~ at least  
25 one of the target individuals.

1 18. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 17 wherein selecting one or  
2 more target individuals further comprises identifying members having contact paths of

3 less than a predetermined number of intervening members between each target individual  
4 and the first member.

1 19. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 17 wherein providing the  
2 first member with contact paths comprises:

3 modeling a people network of the organization based on communications of  
4 members of the organization across a network; and

5 determining the contact paths by analyzing the level of interaction between  
6 members of the organization.

1 20. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 19 wherein modeling a  
2 people network comprises representing the people network as a directed graph having a  
3 node for each member of the organization, the nodes interfaced by edges representing  
4 levels of interaction.

1 21. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 20 wherein the  
2 communications network supports plural type of communication and wherein each edge  
3 has a set of weights, each type of communication having an associated weight.

1 22. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 19 wherein the  
2 communications comprise e-mail communications.

1 23. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 19 wherein the  
2 communications comprise instant message communications.

1 24. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 19 wherein the  
2 communications comprise phone communications.

1 25. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 19 wherein determining the  
2 contact paths comprises performing a strongest path analysis using the people network  
3 model to prioritize the one or more target individuals.

1           26.     (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1 wherein determining a  
2 contact path between the first member of the organization and the target individual  
3 comprises:  
4           determining a contact path between the first member of the organization and the  
5 target individual, wherein the contact path includes multiple intervening members of the  
6 organization between the first member and the target individual.

1           27.     (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 10 wherein the people  
2 network representation includes a contact path between the first member and the one or  
3 more target individuals and the contact path includes multiple intervening members of the  
4 organization between the first member and at least one of the one or more target  
5 individuals.

1           28.     (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 17 wherein providing the  
2 first member with at least one contact path to at least one of the target individuals  
3 comprises:  
4           providing the first member with at least one contact path to at least one of the  
5 target individuals, wherein the contact path includes multiple intervening members of the  
6 organization between the first member and at least one of the target individuals.

1           29.     (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1 further comprising:  
2           providing data to a computer system, wherein the data causes the computer  
3 system to display the contact path and the expertise at least one of target individuals.

1           30.     (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1 wherein storing in a  
2 memory further comprises:  
3           storing the data in a contact database and the data, including the data that states  
4 the one or more areas of expertise for the multiple members of the organization, is stored  
5 in the contact database.

1           31.     (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 10 wherein the memory  
2 comprises a contact database and the data, including the data that states the one or more  
3 areas of expertise for the multiple members of the organization, is stored in the contact  
4 database.

1           32.     (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 10 wherein the code  
2 executable by the processor further comprises:  
3           a display module to provide data to a computer system, wherein the data causes  
4 the computer system to display target individuals with rankings based on expertise.

1           33.     (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 17 further comprising:  
2           providing data to a computer system for displaying the contact path and the  
3 expertise of at least one of the of target individuals.

1           34.     (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 17 wherein storing in a  
2 memory further comprises:  
3           storing the data in a contact database and the data, including the data that states  
4 the one or more areas of expertise for the multiple members of the organization, is stored  
5 in the contact database.